

Dear FCC Commissioners & Staff:

I understand that the FCC is considering regulations that would permit only telephone companies and cable TV operators to offer broadband internet services to consumers, by denying independent ISPs access to their networks. Such a change in the regulations would be in the long run counterproductive, and would in fact be detrimental to consumers.

I have been a loyal subscriber to a local ISP in Louisville for nearly 10 years. IgLou Internet Services has been responsive to my questions and technical problems, in a way that no large corporation could match. IgLou and other local ISPs in Kentucky have battled with BellSouth for months to gain access to BellSouth's DSL network. After considerable efforts in the courts, BellSouth finally relented last year and opened its DSL network to the local ISPs. IgLou can now offer broadband service to its customers.

But not to me. I live in a rural area, and BellSouth has not as yet brought DSL to my community. In fact, there are parts of suburban Louisville that do not yet have DSL service. I am convinced that if there were more competition to provide such services to consumers, DSL access would soon be available to everyone who wanted it.

I find it hard to fathom why the FCC would consider removing what limited opportunity for competition there is by allowing the baby Bells to shut off ISP access to their broadband systems. A user of a local ISP should not be forced to switch to AOL, Earthlink, a Bell ISP, or MSN to obtain broadband access. It would be the equivalent of permitting only certain auto manufacturers to offer automatic transmissions in their cars. A person needing such a transmission would be forced to buy only from those manufacturers. It would hardly be free enterprise.

I believe it is clear that BellSouth would just as soon not share its network facilities with local ISPs. It is also clear that BellSouth would prefer to expand DSL service at its own apparently glacial pace. It is time for the FCC to convince the Bells that consumers want easy and open access to broadband services. Force the Bells to share their DSL networks with the local ISPs. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Wheaton
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